## Writing Your Cover Letter

- 1. Always write to a specific individual rather than a personnel office. Whenever feasible, use networking sources to introduce yourself in the opening paragraph of your letter. Be sure you spell the individual's name correctly.
- 2. Show the employer that you've done your homework and have a genuine grasp of the organization's personnel needs and philosophy of business. Be sincere in your praise, but don't over do it!
- 3. Write each cover letter separately, even if you use a common framework. Personalize the letter with a sentence or two designed to reflect your sincere interest in the specific employer.
- 4. Use natural language in simple, clear sentences. Don't try to impress the reader with unusual vocabulary or complicated sentence structures.
- 5. Express your capabilities with confidence, but avoid exaggerating your level of experience. Two part time jobs at a department store do not constitute "extensive" retail management experience.

- 6. Check and recheck your letter for correctness with regard to spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Be sure to have someone who is a good writer review your letter with you.
- 7. Make sure the final letter is completely professional in appearance. Use standard business letter format on stationery that matches your resume. Do not use dot matrix printers or inferior typewriter ribbons.
- 8. Finish your letter with a strong closing which indicates the action you desire. Take the initiative by requesting an interview and/or stating your intention to call in a week or two.
- 9. Let your personality and energy shine through your words. Use a few vivid details about your background to capture the reader's interest.
- 10. It is important to mention activities, honors, and special skills. These can show the skills that employers look for such as leadership, organization, critical thinking, teamwork, self management, initiative, and influencing others.
- 11. Keep copies of everything you send, and follow up according to your stated intentions. However, don't rely too heavily on cover letters to get your job. Pursue other avenues of inquiry as well.

99 A Street Mytown, NH 03000 May 10, 2001 Mr. Neville Hiresalot, Personnel Director Bigbucks National Bank 1234 Money Street Mytown, NH 03000 Dear Mr. Hiresalot: I am interested in applying for the full-time, temporary position of teller at your Main Street Branch, as advertised in the May 9 Daily News. Currently, I am a senior at East City High School and have concentrated my studies in the area of business and accounting. While maintaining a 3.8 GPA, I have worked part-time at Crown Gifts for two years. Providing quality customer service and handling cash transactions has given me experience well-matched to your teller position. It is my understanding that this teller position will cover for employees taking summer vacations; so it may be helpful to you to know that I will be available to work flexible hours, as needed, from June 4 through August 31. Experience gained with a financial institution of your excellent reputation will provide me with a valuable foundation as I begin in September to pursue a degree in finance at County College. Enclosed is a copy of my resume for your review. I will be happy to come in for an interview at your convenience, and will contact you early next week to schedule a time. Thank you for your consideration. Anita Newjob

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http://www.msstate.edu/dept/Coop/interview/cover.html Mississippi State University Cooperative Education Program

